

Island will be eroded by more people arriving from the mainland and even suggests some sort of political policy should be enforced to prevent this, which is particularly interesting since the author and his family are Chilean. He – or the *moai*, anyway – asks if alcohol or drugs will arrive (they have) and if horses would be replaced by noisy motorcycles and motor vehicles (they have). Perhaps more rhetorically, the author asks other questions or raises other issues – like the stratification of social classes on the island (we see some evidence of that today), dilution of Rapanui culture (according to Makihara, only half of the island's residents today are Rapanui¹⁰), the introduction of crime (vandalism, assault, and even murder has been reported on Easter Island¹¹), and deterioration of the Rapanui language (which is probably unavoidable though efforts are underway to diminish the extent of the loss).

Despite its occasional flaws, and because the author wisely chose to largely confine himself to his two years on the island, treating the accounts with great emotion, conviction, and occasional wit, I can recommend this book comfortably to anyone who would like to get not so much an impression of Easter Island in the early 1950s but the impression of a person and his family who lived on Easter Island in the 1950s and truly committed to doing it right – and beyond cultivating a sense of respect for the Verdugo-Binimelis family, in so far as this book's story advances the knowledge about our favorite island, that makes it worth it.

The few flaws are worth overlooking to get a glimpse into life and solitude on Easter Island in the middle of the 20th century.



Isla de Pascua: El Sueño Imposible de Antoni Pujador

by Francesc Amorós

276 pages with colour and b/w photos
ISBN 84-96483-20-0 In Spanish; soft cover

Review by María Eugenia Santa Coloma

A song in the film *El hombre de la Mancha* is called "The Impossible Dream" and it is used for the title to this book, based on the life of Antoni Pujador. This is the story of a dreamer who fell in love with Rapa Nui in the 1970s and made the island and its people a part of his life. From his first visit to the island in 1974 until the end of his days, he desired to remain forever on the island. And thus it happened: his ashes are buried in the cemetery of Hanga Roa.

To write the story of an idealist such as Antoni Pujador, who was born in Barcelona in 1948, appears to be interesting and, if the author defines his own work as

¹⁰ "Rapa Nui Ways of Speaking Spanish: Language Shift and Socialization on Easter Island" - *Language in Society* 34:727-762 (2005).

¹¹ See many of the entries in the *Rapa Nui Journal* under "What's New in Hanga Roa" for examples of these types of events.

"enthusiastic", it is – at the least – a challenge for the reader who hopes that, in addition to enthusiastic, it is exciting.

The book is divided into four parts, including a prologue and an introduction by the author, in which the background of the book is explained. Written in a colloquial language, the first part is dedicated to the early life of the protagonist, Antoni Pujador. In the second part, his first trip to Rapa Nui is narrated. The third part is dedicated to his participation in one of the archaeological expeditions lead by Thor Heyerdahl, and finally, the fourth is related to the end of his "impossible dream", with some testimonial documents included as an epilogue.

In the first eighty pages of the book, the author reviews the youth of Pujador. Climbing and aeronautics were two of the interests which marked his life and which Amorós describes in detail. For example, the year of the foundation of the climbing clubs, the numbers of members, the head office of the club, etc., is mentioned, as well as lists of the names – all anonymous to the reader – of members who joined some of the hiking groups in which Pujador was involved. All the elevations and characteristics of the mountains he climbed are also described, including the length and the type of rope used in a certain climb or the unevenness of a particular cliff.

Continuing in the same style, Amorós describes – with some errors – the aeronautical activities developed by the protagonist. Not only the different types of aircrafts piloted by A. Pujador are mentioned in detail, but even the number of available seats and the number of cylinders of certain models of aircraft. Here Rapa Nui has fallen into oblivion.

After a first part without a narrative rhythm, in the second part the name of "Easter Island" turns up again, inviting the reader to recover a little bit of interest for the book. Here, the first visit of Pujador to Rapa Nui is narrated, his first friends, and his increasing fascination for a place that would become a part of his life. Some facts are repeated more than once and some biographical notes of people unknown to the reader are included. This part does not lack references to UFOs nor the mysteries hidden in the island's caves. The discovery of a four-headed *moai* and several *rongo-rongo* tablets by A. Pujador is mentioned.

Two chapters are dedicated to the map of Easter Island that Pujador made with the author's cooperation. Here we read many of Amorós' personal references and he states that he is "one of the few persons who can swank about knowing the place in which the Norwegian explorer lived". He speaks, of course, about Thor Heyerdahl.

And he is the one whom the third part, entitled "1987: Archaeology and Politics", is dedicated to. Likewise, the image of Heyerdahl beside Pujador is used to illustrate the front cover of the book. It is explained in an anecdote how Pujador took part in the archaeological campaign carried out by Heyerdahl. After a visit to his house in Italy, Pujador asked the Norwegian explorer about being accepted as a member of his archaeological team, and he also asked if he could take his friend Amorós with him, although neither were archaeologists. More than other parts, this one has

many autobiographical references, with lots of personal interventions, and even a chapter with Amorós' personal notes during this campaign is included. Antoni Pujador recedes to the background.

In the fourth and last part, the chapters are reduced to a few pages, where the last years of Pujador's life are described. The book ends with a poem in French, without a translation, which prevents those who do not know this language from understanding the final tribute.

In this biographical book, the author's presence is constant: in many pictures – some of them without the protagonist of the book – and in detailed descriptions of all the aspects related to the island. In addition, some personal letters sent by Pujador are included.

Thus, the first part describes climbing and aeronautics – Pujador's interests at his early life – and the third part seems to be more dedicated to the author. What is left of Antoni Pujador and his relationship with Rapa Nui? I ask myself if the exciting life of Pujador could have been expressed in half of the pages.

The book lacks some details, such as the translation of certain notes and letters in English and French (the reader who does not understand the latter can skip some pages). Also, some references are repeated. All these data, the result of a long and meticulous process of documentation, are mostly irrelevant.

In summary, throughout the book the admiration that Amorós felt toward the protagonist of the story is reflected in the superlative adjectives that he constantly uses when talking about Pujador's life. It is nostalgic, a personal tribute that seems more addressed to his close friends than to an anonymous reader, although, thanks to this book, we now know more about Antoni Pujador and his passion for Easter Island. I must confess that *El sueño imposible de Antoni Pujador* is more enthusiastic than exciting, but if you are interested in Pujador's or Amorós' life, this is your book.

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- Clava. 2007. Número 6, Revista de la Corporación Museo Fonck. Editor General: José Miguel Ramírez A. This issue contains six papers, three of them concerning Easter Island: "Una residencia agrícola en las tierras altas de Rapa Nui: La ocupación de un hare oka (18-473) en la region de Vaitea," by C. M. Stevenson, T. N. Ladefoged y Sonia Haoa; "Levantamiento de 300 estructuras en Rapa Nui: Registro y documentación," by A. Guerra T.; and "Se llevaron todo el mana, mito, memoria y medicina como reivindicación política en la

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- Tahiti Pacifique*. 2007. No. 193 for May. This issue contains a brief article about the Tapati festival on Easter Island (p. 40-41) plus a description of new hotels in Tahiti – and the one left on Huahine (three others on Huahine were either destroyed in hurricanes or closed due to a lack of clients) (pp. 14-20). This issue also has photographs of the new island that has appeared in the Pacific. Photographs (pp. 26-27) show miles of floating pumice, and steam rising from the new island.
- Tahiti Pacifique*. 2007. No. 194 for June. Contains a report on an expedition to the island of Eiao by J-L. Candelot. www.tahiti-pacifique.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear RNJ, I received my copy of the *Journal* and was very interested to read John H Bryant's article about the Byrd Antarctic II Expedition's visits to Easter Island. Amazingly enough, I can supply further evidence of the *Bear of Oakland's* visit in 1935, on its way home.

I enclose an image of an envelope cover with the *Bear of Oakland's* cachet and handwritten underneath is "Easter Island South Pacific Ocean". The cover is addressed to Dunedin, New Zealand and postmarked at Christobal, Canal Zone, April 25th 1935. When I purchased the cover I had hopes that it would be a good addition to my Postal History collection of the island but anyone could write "Easter Island South Pacific Ocean" on a cover, without it necessarily having been anywhere near the island. I realized that some research was needed.

I obtained a copy of Admiral Byrd's book about the expedition and found the brief mention that the *Bear of*